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A LETTER

WHEREIN IS SHEWED,

First, What *Worship* is due to *Images*
According to the

Second Council of NICE.

Secondly, That the *Papists* are very *unjust*
In charging *SCHISM* on the

Church of ENGLAND.

As also that the *Church of Rome* is most *notori-
ously guilty of that Sin.*

By S. B.

*Thou shalt not bow down thy self to them nor servt them, for I the Lord thy God
am a jealous God, &c. Exod. 20. 5.
Come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive
not of her plagues. Rev. 18. 4.*

LO N D O N,

Printed for *William Churchill Bookseller in Dorchester.*
MDCCLXXX.

230°
cavz
6026

NAME OF POND

Water from a well 100' away and about
the same depth as the pond.

700752

Canal or ditch leading to pond
from well

TO THE R E A D E R.

Reader,

THE following Letter was lately writ for the satisfaction of a private person, and is now published for the use of those who are in danger rather of being frightened than Argued out of their Religion. I observe the Roman Church has a sort of Hectors abroad, who having raked together all the Aggravations of Schism they can, when they endeavour to proselyte people of ordinary capacities, they fall foul upon them, and with extraordinary Zeal affuse them, they are in a way that can never bring them to Heaven, their Church is guilty of Damnable Schism, and unless they return into the bosom of the true Catholick Church (by which they mean their own) there is neither hope nor possibility of their Salvation. Many are so ignorant and timerous as to suffer this course to unsettle them. Nay too often it happens, that if they have not speedy recourse to Men of greater tenderness, skill, and honesty

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To the Reader.

than those Bigots be, they are quite lost. Such is their Confidence and Importunity, they speedily overcome a common Modesty; when people waver and are under such an indisposition, they will too easily embrace the Doctrines of that Church under their disguise. Thus have you a reason of this publication, and why it comes forth in so homely a dress.

The Factors for that Church are very busy, and when one Stratagem fails, they suffer not that to discourage them, but set upon some other; nay when their greater attempts succeed not, they still persist, and seem resolved to imitate, unto the last, their great Patron and Master, of whom the Proverb saith, He will play at small game, rather than sit out. May their Constancy, Industry and Zeal in that bad Cause make every sincere Protestant, every true English man out of love with Laziness and formality, yea make every one at least equally vigorous, diligent and earnest for the Defence and Propagation of his most holy Faith. I do not mean by the use of those Treacherous and Diabolical means they use, but of those only which comport with our Religion. This countenances none but what are Charitable and Just.

We cannot be too watchful against such Enemies,

To the Reader.

mies; nor too diligent in endeavouring to hinder the spreading of their poison and infection. Is it not to be lamented that the Children of this world should in their generation be wiser than the Children of Light? 'Tis an Argument of Cowardise and unfaithfulness when people are remiss and careless, whilst their Adversaries are so laborious and active.

The Papists are a dangerous people, especially those of the Jesuitical Faction. Their Principles and Practices are both inconsistent with the peace and welfare of any tolerable and well-model'd Government in the world. And therefore though Private Persons must not use any violent and furious Courses against them (for that were to be Papists under a better profession) yet those who have the Execution of Justice committed to them, may, ought, and it is to be hoped will effectually inflict those Punishments and Severities on them, their Unpeaceable, Traiterous and Rebellious positions and practices deserve. It shall always be one part of my Prayer that people may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all Godliness and honesty; And that Magistrates and Officers may be strong and very courageous, observing to do according to all the Law; And that they may be able men, such as fear God, men of Truth, hating Covetousness. This Exod. 18.
21.

To the Reader.

This sort of people have already been by their abode amongst us, that Curse to us, which God foretold the Israelites, the Canaanitish Idolaters would be to them, if tolerated amongst them. They
Numb. 33. have been pricks in our eyes, and thorns in our sides, and have vexed us in the land wherein we live. And should they now, (after all the warnings we have had, after all the attempts they have made against us) find favour, and be suffered to live (and peaceably we see they will not live) amongst us, and enjoy those privileges they have hitherto had, I am perswaded they will in time effect our ruine, by such ways, as none but their own mischievous fancies can imagine. There is no reason we should expect Peace, quietness and safety, whilst we do voluntarily make our selves a prey to them, who desire not any thing more.

Did they use none but gentle methods for the furthering of their Detestable — Religion (as they call it) some milde chastisements might be their punishments. But since such courses do but make them worse, more wicked, insolent, and daring, since they have so often manifested to the world and so lately too, that they study all the Arts of Cruelty and Murther, yea do daily invent and practise new ones, they deserve according to all the Rules of Equity and Justice, of Reli-

To the Reader.

Religion, Conscience and Reason to have the utmost severities inflicted on them which can be due to the most Barbarous and inhumane Villains.

There is no such thing as *Medicina per verba*: Sermon
Words and talk will never cure the Distem- Preach'd
pers of a Nation. If in good earnest we to the
would be rid of this Legion, and say as our House of
Lord, to the deaf and dumb spirit, go out, Peers, Nov.
and enter no more; (what shall I say? — in Arch-Bi-
short) Solomon's Rod for the back of fools, 13. 1678.
that grow troublesome or dangerous (as it by William
may be prepar'd and manag'd) is a very Arch-Bi-
powerful and effectual Exorcism. If any shop of
think our Religion and Interest may be secure Canterbury,
though this sort of people be not utterly extirpated, Prov. xix.
notwithstanding they give us such frequent proof of
their designs and intentions, I must needs think
their Intellectuals are very dark, or that they
are more than half what the Papists themselves be.
If I be mistaken in their Character, I shall desire
them to pause a while on this *Apologue*. A poor
man Travelling thorough a Country Village with a
Pike-staff on his shoulder, was very furiously as-
saulted by a huge Cur. The poor man managing his
staff with as much dexterity as he could, happened
at last to kill the Dog. The owner immediately appre-
hends him, and bringing him before the Judge, alledged
that

To the Reader.

that he had slain his servant, which defended his life, house, and goods, and therefore demanded satisfaction. The Judge inclining more (on some bye accounts) to respect the Plaintiff, than the justice of the Cause, reproved the poor Fellow very sharply, and peremptorily commanded him to make satisfaction, or else he would commit him to Prison; The poor man not only thought, but made bold to say, that would be a piece of injustice, because he killed the Dog in his own defence. Sirrah, sirrah, said the Judge, you should have turned the other end of your staff, and not the pike, so the Dogs life had been saved and your own in no danger. True Sir, (said the Fellow) if the Dog would have turned his Tail and bit me with that, and not his Teeth, then we should both have parted quietly.

March 31.

1680.

The ERRATA.

Page 5. line 2. read and I do acknowledge, as in a different Character. p. 8. l. 11. r. were. p. 9. l. 1. r. Acts of that Council. p. 10. l. 9. dele more.

FOR

T O M Y

Honoured Friend

M^{rs} M. J.*Madam,*

THE Roman Emissaries have been a long time, and still are, mightily concerned to propagate their own Cause, and Proselyte others to their Religion. For obtaining of these ends they do commonly use more ways than are just and good. I will not insist on the cruel, Bloody, and Un-christian practices their Religion doth countenance and approve, and which they have often attempted, though (praised be God) hitherto in a great measure in vain, in reference to these Nations.

They are commonly very unfaithful in relating the Doctrines of their own Church, and extreamly unjust in casting very groundless and extravagant Aspersions on the Protestants. And if I be not very much mistaken, it is no small prejudice to any Cause when its Patrons and Propagators are ashamed to own it in its native colour, or do study mainly to rail at, and disparage the contrary. 'Tis no good sign whilst men labour to win others to the Church of *Rome*, by representing her Doctrines otherwise

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than

than that Church hath determined; and to shake peoples constancy to their own Communion, by forging most malicious Invectives against it. Would the Learned Men of that Church deal ingenuously, and tell men plainly, and without any Equivocations, what those Doctrines be, wherein they differ from the Protestants, and which are peculiar to their Church, laying aside their hard words and unintelligible distinctions, I am perswaded none would turn Papists, who were not either prodigiously stupid, or else desperately wicked.

Though I do not positively determine whence it is, that men of great reading, and of rational and ingenious discourse for the main, do either adhere to that Church, or sometimes forsake a better Communion to joyn with her; yet such would do well to consider seriously, whether Interest do not sway more with them than Religion? Saint Paul speaks of some

2 Thess. 2. 10, 11. *who received not the love of the Truth that they might be saved:* And immediately he adds, *For this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lye:* so that this needs not to unsettle you at all.

Be it what it will, that has such a cursed influence on them, I am sure it is disingenuous and base, as Impious, as Uncharitable, to endeavour to draw others into their own Damnation, by hiding their Errors, and assuring them their Church doth teach nothing but what is innocent and good, till they have seduced them too far to be retrieved. Thus deal they with those they would Proselyte, as others do with Boys they would steal; tell them of nothing that is dangerous and hurtful till they are sure of them, though afterwards they condemn them to the worst kind of drudgery and bondage.

Their

Their other Artifice by which they endeavour to create irreconcilable prejudices in mens minds against the Protestant Religion in general, and the Church of *England* in particular; (I mean that of raising and suggesting false accusations against them, and charging them most unjustly with crimes of the deepest dye) is as wicked and unchristian, and an Artifice they do as frequently make use of as the former.

That these are some of their usual methods, is evident enough, both by the Books they have writ, and the Discourses they have had with those they have laboured to win over to their Church, and the acknowledgments even of some, who have been so unhappy, as to yield themselves up to their persuasions.

It may suffice at present, to mind you of the substance of that Paper you received from one of the Church of *Rome*; who being of your acquaintance did attempt to shake your constancy to the Church of *England*, and win you over to that of *Rome*. What he faith is very agreeable to what they of that Church have often Printed, and more frequently asserted in their private converse. But if you please to consider what I shall add to every branch of it, to discover how unreasonable and false all his affirmations be, I hope you will be in some measure satisfied, that the Stratagems they of *Rome* do commonly use for the gaining of Proselytes, are very unbecoming the Christian Religion.

He both misrepresents the Doctrine of that Church concerning Image-worship (the point you instanced in which you could not be reconciled unto) and without any plausible pretence, Magisterially declares *The Church of England, and all other Churches not*

in Communion with that of Rome, guilty of Schism. From hence he takes occasion to declaim freely against every one who is not of that Church, asserting *His Condition more than hazardous*, whilst he continues his separation from her. She being (as he saith) *the only True, Ancient, and Apostolick Church in the World.* This is a way proper enough to beguile and deceive Ignorant and uninquiring people, but it will not satisfie those who are judicious, and think it not safe to alter their Religion, because of other mens Confidence and Uncharitableness.

He tells you, *The Doctrine of that Church is not to be judged of, by what the Scholmen, and some private Doctors have taught, but by what she hath published in her Councils.* And that notwithstanding he doth acknowledge they have Printed several things unadvisedly concerning Image-worship, yet he must assure you this reflects not on what that Church doth teach; Her Doctrine being very different from their private Opinions. This indeed appears plausible at first sight, but on inquiry, I cannot discern any reason why their sense and Interpretation of the Councils may not be as Authentick as his. I confess there may be some pretenders to particular Churches, who may publish their own private sentiments; and that it would be highly unjust to charge such Tenets as the Doctrines of that Church. But I see not the like reason to excuse a Church from those Doctrines which are published by men in her Communion, when approved and recommended to the world by the highest Authority, and in the most solemn manner appointed by that Church for that end. However I am willing to consider the Doctrine of that Church in the present instance, by
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the measure he proposes, viz. The Second Council of Nice, and do acknowledg the Council of Trent doth refer to this Council in this particular.

After a long Harangue concerning his great Travels, his diligent and impartial perusal of the Fathers, Councils, and the Writings of all the Learned and moderate men he could hear of, of what persuasion soever; yea notwithstanding his particular observance of the practice of that Church in most parts of Europe, and his conversing with the Members of other Churches: After a great commendation of himself on all these and some other accounts (by which means no doubt he expected to obtain your belief of what he should afterwards affirm) he tells you he cannot see any thing in that Church touching the Worshipping of Images, but what is more than innocent, even highly commendable, and exactly agreeing with what the Second Council of Nice hath decreed in this point. Which is (saith he) no more, than that an honorary respect and veneration be given to the Images of Christ, and his Saints, such as is given to the Books of the Holy Gospels, to the Sacraments and other Sacred things: The Council having often and expressly denied Latria to be due to them.

This brought to my remembrance the *Literato in Bocalini*, who presenting *Apollo* with an Eloquent Oration he had composed in praise of the present Age; and being asked whether he had considered the Age he had so highly commended, as he ought, and with what Spectacles he had view'd and contemplated it? Answered, He had not only view'd the Courts of great and famous Princes, the most accurately that he could, but had Travelled over the greatest

greatest part of *Europe*, in all which Courts and Countries, he had diligently observed the lives of those who command in chief, and their fashions who obeyed; and that he had observed nothing in them, but what was highly to be praised. But in passing his judgment on all the particulars of the present Age, which appeared to him to deserve praise, he not aiding himself by any Spectacles, made use only of the eyes of his judgment, which he thought were not dim-sighted. *Apollo* Replyed, That surely he had written that his Oration in the dark, for the true state of the present Age could not be seen unless a man did put the purest politick Spectacles on his Nose. And causing an excellent pair of Spectacles to be given him, he bid him view the present Age through them, which he had no sooner done, but he saw a World full fraught with Cozenage, Tricks, and Plots, where nothing was more studied than how to hurl mens Neighbours into wicked practices, by false pretence of sanctified meanings. The *Literato* was very unwilling to believe what he then saw was the Age he had commended in his Oration: But *Apollo* assur'd him it was really so. Whoever lays aside partiality, considers things seriously, and reads the Council in a clear light, will discern something more in it, than you are told of. Your Friend either read the Council in a different light from that wherein I read it, or else he understands the words in a different sense. Which is in the right I willingly submit to any indifferent persons determination. And will now acquaint you as briefly as I can, with a few particulars I take notice of, in, and relating to that Council.

1. This Council was purely designed for the promoting

moting of Image-Worship, and more especially in opposition to the Council of *Constantinople*, which had several years before been very strict and severe against it, and the ordinary occasions of it.

2. They were so resolved for this sort of Worship, they could even sacrifice any thing, however evil and irregular it either was in it self, or appeared so to them, if it were likely to assist and further them in this business. For Example. *Tarafus* being a *Laick*, was advanced to the Patriarchship of *Constantinople*; which did greatly disgust *Hadrian* then Pope at *Rome*, when he first heard of it. But his being for Image-Worship made amends for every thing, rendred him well qualified for the Place and Office, yea obtained his Holinesses approbation: Though he esteemed him before, an illiterate and unworthy person, one that could not be admitted to that Office without violence to all the Ecclesiastical Canons; yet when he understands he would be firm and zealous for Image-Worship, he consents he should be Patriarch, yea afterwards calls him the most Blessed and Universal Patriarch. This was one of their Infallible Sirs.

3. This Council or Synod was first called at *Constantinople*, but because the *Constantinopolitans* were so very much against what was now principally intended. (*viz.* the introduction of Image-Worship, and the establishing it by a Law) that it could not succeed there, it was Celebrated at *Nice in Bithynia*, a place they thought more convenient for this work, and where they might carry it on with less opposition. Now supposing this Worshipping of Images were neither Idolatrous, nor Superstitious, let all the world judge, whether 350 Bishops were
not

not well employed, when they Assembled, and laid their heads together so solemnly, about such an idle, trifling concern as this is at best? For granting it could be made manifest that there is no hurt nor danger in this Worship (which I am perswaded can never be) yet I am sure they cannot prove it either necessary or useful.

4. Being met together they use a great many Formalities, and would fain perswade the world they have a great deal to say for themselves, and the Worship they now come to establish, and impose upon the Church. But for my part I can discern very little more than a multitude of foolish and ill framed stories, very impertinent Citations, and most of them out of Authours universally acknowledged spurious, and most illiterate, and odd kind of Interpretations of Scripture, and some of the wildest Answers

Diss. Eccl. Anglic. contra Archi-epis. Spalat. p. 46^s
Audeo dicere (saith the Learned *Crankan-*
& borpe) *si ea primum que parerga sunt, & ad id quod*
volunt probandum aliena; tum imposture ac menda-
cia detrahantur, vix viginti sententiolas ex tam
grandi Actorum istius Synodi volumine, reliquas
fore. I dare say if you take away the plain im-
pertinences, and gross lies out of this Council,
there will not remain above twenty Sentences in
the whole Volume. Very agreeable unto this, is that
Censure of the Council of Frankford which he im-
mediately annexes to his own. Penè omnia in eis
somniorum imaginationibus, & fantasticis quibus-
dam obumbrationibus similia sunt, & penè nihil est
ibi, quod non somnii vanitatem, aut alterius cuius-
dam deliramenti bebetudinem redoleat, cunctaq;
interiori palato degustata, insipidum insulsumque sa-
porem

porem referunt. There is scarce any thing in the Council, but idle Dreams, and foolish dotages, and what must needs offend any considering person. This is that Council, your Friend and another of that Gang, calls *The most August and Venerable Tribunal upon Earth.*

5. This Council decrees Veneration to be due to Images, and Anathematizes all those who question or suspect it, yea who profess this Veneration, but do forbear to discover it by external Worship.

6. To justifie it self, it declares this Veneration is not due, because of the matter of which the Images are made, but because of the persons they are designed to represent.

7. Now there being a great difference betwixt the persons whose Images are made use of, in that Church, there must likewise be a difference in the Worship and Veneration to be paid them. For an equal Veneration cannot be due to every Image, whilst the person represented by one, and for whose sake the Veneration becomes due, differs much in point of excellency, from the person represented by another Image. And to prevent our Error here, the Council lays down a Rule for the proportioning our Worship to every Image: Which is, *To give the same Worship to the Image which belongs unto the Antitype.* As the Relation the Image has to what it represents, is the reason why Veneration is decreed due unto it; so this Veneration is to be defined by the excellency of what is represented: the Council assigning this reason for it, *because the Worship goes unto the Antitype.*

8. These general Rules being laid down, the Council thought fit to omit instancing, in the Images of

God, or of the Trinity; though it is far enough from prohibiting such Images; yea that of *Trent* doth suppose them. And therefore most of its determinations refer to the Images of Saints. Indeed, here, it pretends to require only an honorary Veneration. But what it names thus, with the Worship annexed by It, and the Council of *Trent*, viz. Kneeling, Bowing, Prostration, lighting of Candles, and burning of Incense, &c. is more ~~more~~ than can be rationally supposed due to the Saints themselves. And as this is not all, that Church doth decree due to Saints, so neither is it just to imagine this Council did design no more, unto their Images. For since the same Worship is due to one, as to the other, what Worship soever that Church did decree due to Saints, this Council must be supposed to decree due to their Images. And if we consider what that Church did teach concerning Invocation of Saints, and performing to them other parts of Worship, which were anciently comprehended in the word *Latria*, the same being according to this Council, to be given to their Images; we have not only just reason to charge them with giving them more than is their due, but with flat Idolatry. However let them call this Worship by what name they please, that signifies not one rush, nor will it in the least alter the nature of the Worship, or abate the fault. And God having appropriated unto himself all Religious Adoration and Worship, *Exod.* 20. 5. *Revel.* 19. 10. it is abominable Idolatry to give any of it, by what name soever it be distinguished, to any Creature. Indeed they are apt when pressed with this, to fall foul on the Church of *England*, and charge the same fault on Her. But they will be weary of this, if they please

to consider the difference there is, betwixt making any thing the object of Religious Worship, and using any thing as an occasion to excite us, to the paying of Religious Worship unto God ; and how much the impoling of a thing differs, from the bare recommending of it.

I do not find that the Church of *Rome* doth allow any sort of Worship to be due only unto God, unless it be the offering of Sacrifices. And according to her notions, she appears defective even in this particular, so that it is only in words she appropriateth this unto him. For albeit, many understanding Learned men have deliberately enough declared the Mass to be no proper Sacrifice ; yet she asserts the contrary, and seems to go too far in applying this unto Saints. For she appointeth Masses to be Celebrated in Honour and Remembrance of the Saints. And though the Council of *Trent* is pleased to distinguish betwixt the doing this in remembrance of them, and offering it unto them ; yet I am sure our Blessed Saviour did not institute his Supper, in remembrance of any but himself alone, *Luk. 22. 19.*

According to the rule before mentioned, they may and ought to perform any act of Worship to the Images of Saints, which they may to the Saints themselves. And whether all this do amount but to an Honorary Veneration, I submit to any sober judgment. However, the same Worship must be due to the Images of God, and of the Trinity, as is due (according to their own rule) to the Antitypes, unless they can produce some good reason, why we must be more unjust to these, than to the other : For they have not yet decreed the use of such Images unlawful.

9 'Tis true, the Council doth deny *Latria* to be due to Images. But if you take this word in its ancient and proper signification, and as comprehending whatsoever was a part of Divine Worship, then it denies that to be due, which at the same time it decrees due. No doubt they had more reason for the one than for the other. Indeed they do herein contradict themselves: But it is their own fault, they cannot speak properly on this occasion. When men will advance and defend any Idolatrous Worship, and yet pretend they design no such thing as Idolatry, it ceaseth to be a wonder if they are infatuated, and do speak contradictions.

But supposing what they decree due to the Images of Saints were not truly *Latria*, (which they can never prove, till they have razed the Second Commandment out of mens memories as well as out of their own writings) yet this denial can only relate to those Images whose Antitypes cannot claim it; for it must be due to the other, unless the Council may be acknowledged very inconsistent with it self. For this cause it is, the Papists have coined a distinction, which they commonly make use of, when nothing else will save their credit, viz. Absolute and Relative *Latria*.

That this was really the design of the Council, may appear by several expressions in the Council, affirming *that by the worship of Images, we are carried undividedly unto the indivisible Deity*. And by the wild and extravagant Answers they make to those Objections, the *Constantinopolitan* Fathers had laid in their way. And by the practice of that Church since. For I hope your Friend will not reject the Pontifical, Rituals, and other Authentick Offices

Offices of that Church, as not agreeing with this Council, though he deal so severely with the *Tenets of particular Schoolmen and Doctors.* And in these *Latria* is as well declared due, as given, unto the Cross.

10. The Council doth expressly decree not only that we must pay Images an Honorary Worship, but that we must use them to bring the persons represented to our minds, and to lead us to their originals, and to make us partakers of Sanctification. Which last is an expression, that will not sound very well, unless some favourable interpretation be found out for it.

11. I cannot find that by *Latria* they understand any thing else, than the Worshipping something with a belief and persuasion that it is God. With this pretence, the Papists have of late endeavoured to vindicate themselves from the charge of Idolatry. And Mr. Thorndike having, I suppose, little else to say for them, has on the same account, acquitted them from this crime in his *Just Weights and Measures.* But if this were enough to excuse men from Idolatry, I think most, if not all who are charged with it in Scripture, or by the Ancient Fathers, were as little guilty of it as the Papists be. That of Julian is a known instance, who notwithstanding he acknowledged, and professed one God, and Worshipped the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was yet condemned for a notorious Idolater by the Christian Church.

Who ever will impartially consider all this, will scarce find a sufficient reason to excuse that Church from Idolatry. And therefore I think I may justly conclude, all your Friend doth superstruct on the account

count and commendation he hath given you of his Church in this particular, doth of its own accord fall to the ground. And if it be duly considered, will be an unanswerable Argument to hinder your yielding up your self to that Church, to whose Communion he would perswade you.

He tells you (again) *this is all their Church doth either Teach or Practise.* (Concerning their Doctrine I refer you to what I have already writ. Concerning their Practice, I will only desire you to read three or four Pages in the Bishop of Hereford's Letter concerning Popish Idolatry, and the last Chapter in Dr. Brevints Book named *Saul and Samuel at Endor*, who were both eye-witnesses) That *this is it the Protestants have made such a noise about, and falsely called Idolatry.* That hence it plainly appears they are errant Schismaticks, it being impossible they should make good the charge of Idolatry against that Church, and consequently justifie their separation from it. Though he appears warm in prosecuting the Protestants, and charging Schism close on the Church of England for separating from her Mother the Church of Rome; yet he writes no more than what (he faith) the Learnedest of our own Communion have been necessitated from the evidence and merit of the Cause publickly to acknowledge. And that he at present writes after Mr. Thorndikes Copy, who was of great and deserved fame in this Church. Having magnified Mr. Thorndikes judgment in this of Schism, and told you how dangerous it is to adhere to a Schismatical Communion, he entreats you to consider your Soul is concerned, and for its sake to return to the Church of Rome, in whose Communion alone your Salvation can be secured.

Just
Weights
and Mea-
sures.

This

This I take to be the substance of the latter part of his paper: Wherein I discern not any thing, but an high vaunt, an unskilful application of general terms, and a misunderstanding of particular Authors.

Before I do particularly reflect on what he asserts, I will desire you to take notice of these things.

1. That all Churches are originally Equal, and Independent.

2. That Idolatry is not the only thing that can justifie a separation from any Church.

3. That Mr. *Thorndike* doth suppose the Reformation of this Church to be grounded on something distinct from the charge of Idolatry on the Church of *Rome*.

4. That though particular Churches ought to be united, yet there is no need of acknowledging a superiority, and governing power in one over all the rest, on which the others must depend, and to which they must yield obedience. There is no mention, or supposal of such an union in Scripture; there is not any footsteps of it in any of the first times of Christianity. A profession of the same Faith and mutual love, and a readiness to admonish, advise, and help one another as occasion shall require, and an Administration of the same Ordinances in particular Churches, taking the Scripture for their rule and measure in these things, is as much as is necessary to the unity of the visible Church, as made up of particular Churches. Indeed if all Churches did agree that nothing else should be required, in order to any ones being admitted to Divine Ordinances, but a profession of the true Faith, and Universal Charity, and the leading of an Innocent and unblameable Conversation; the Members of several Churches might as occasion.

casion offered, more freely Communicate with one another, and this might conduce much towards the effecting a nearer and more firm Union amongst Churches, as well as be a means to bring in all the Christian Subjects under any Government, to be of one and the same Communion. But as this, notwithstanding it might be useful, is not absolutely necessary to the Unity of the Church, so much less can it be absolutely necessary, that all Churches should divest themselves of that Authority they are originally endowed with, and subject themselves to some one, in order to the securing of this Unity. For this is a project not only useless, but which being complied with, would prove exceeding hurtful and injurious.

That the exercise of such an Authority is unpracticable without much iniquity, and great inconvenience, in prejudice to the rights of Christian States and people, to the interests of Religion and Piety, to the peace and welfare of mankind, is largely and very plainly demonstrated by the most Learned Dr.

P. 192. to Barrow in his Treatise of the Popes Supremacy. I think
220. this one Consideration may satisfie any peaceable and conscientious person, of what perillous conse-

Id. p. 217. on would be. *viz. That whereas Christendom is*

split into many parcels, subject to divers Civil Sovereignties, it is expedient that correspondently there should be distinct Ecclesiastical Govern- ments independent of each other, which may comply with the respective Civil Authorities in promoting the good and peace both of Church and State; especially if it be further taken notice of, that nothing hath raised more fierce Dissensions, or so many bloody Wars in Christendom, as mens endeavour-

ing

ing to support this project of Church-union has

5. You need not trouble your self because of the great stir the men of that Church make about Schism. For as they usually manage that charge against the Protestants, it is but (as the Learned *Hales* terms it) a Theological Scare-Crow. They commonly appear ignorant of the thing, whilst they so frequently use the word. And when they reckon up the great privileges people are made partakers of, by keeping in the Unity of the Church, and the dismal aggravations which accompany their separation from it, they mention not any particulars, but what are peculiar to the Unity, either of the Invisible Church, or of the Universal Church visible, which they very illiterately, and with as much disingenuity as confidence, apply to peoples being in subjection, or refusing subjection, to the Church of *Rome*; whereas this is at best but a particular Church, and one that is more abundantly notorious than any other Church (I know of) for separating from the Unity of the Church under both of the forementioned considerations.

These things do sufficiently manifest how weak his Assertions are, and how little he considered what Mr. *Thorndikes* judgment was, touching the Reformation of this Church. But I will now reply particularly to the several things he pretends, that you may distinctly perceive his mistake in every one of them; and how justly Schism may be charged on that Church, whose members are so ready to lay it unto others.

From what I have before observed concerning the Second Council of *Nice*, I think it doth plainly appear, their Image Worship is nothing less than Idolatry.

latry. But suppose they could clear themselves from Idolatry in this point, yet Idolatry is not only charged on, but proved against that Church on other accounts; as you may see at large in the most Learned and Elaborate writings of Dr. *stillingfleet*, Dr. *Whitby*, Dr. *Henry More*, and the Bishop of *Hereford*. Now this charge remaining good in any particular sufficeth to do their work for them, and justifie a separation. Nay were that Church free from Idolatry in every instance, yet she may be guilty in such a manner another way, that to refuse Communion with her, cannot properly and truly be named Schism. Yea I further add, that what Church soever doth impose any Doctrine as an Article of Faith, which is not recommended to us in the Scriptures, or doth make any thing which is unlawful, a term of Communion with her, is so abominably corrupted, that none may lawfully joyn in Communion with her, but have a good and sufficient warrant to separate. This holds good in reference to the particular members of such a Church, much more in reference to other Churches, which cannot be any further concerned with that particular Church, than they are obliged in duty and Charity to advise, and endeavour her recovery: Unless they have ignorantly and unhappily subjected themselves unto her, and involved themselves in the same guilt. If they have done thus, they stand obliged to continue in that state of subjection no longer than till their eyes be open, and they have power and opportunity to cast away that yoke, their own ignorance, and the others impious and Tyrannical Ambition brought upon them. Every Church has power to reform her self, if she be corrupted in any point, and ought to do so, and leave

leave those which are stubborn and obstinate, to be branded with the marks of their own wickedness and impurity.

I am sure the Church of *Rome* is notoriously faulty. Neither your Friend nor any other member of that Church, can prove any one of those Doctrines wherein the Church of *Rome* doth differ from the Church of *England*, to have been taught or imposed as an Article of Faith, by the whole Christian Church, in any of the first five hundred years after our Blessed Saviours Ascent into Heaven; no nor in any Age since.

I acknowledg the *Roman* Church doth profess all those Articles of Faith, the Christian Religion doth teach; but she adheres not to these only. She undertakes to add more Doctrines, as Articles of Faith, than true Christianity or the Ancient Defenders of it, ever taught or approved. And to make more Articles of Faith than God has appointed, doth as much derogate from his Authority, as to refuse to admit any which he has instituted as such. Now when that Church did thus impose any new Articles, or made any unlawful thing, a term of Communion, she separated from the true Christian Church, which did neither impose, nor admit any such Articles or Things. And therefore though I acknowledge the Church of *Rome* was anciently a very pure holy Christian Church, though not the only one that was so in the World; yet I know not any reason, why I should believe she must necessarily continue so, in all times and Ages; especially whilst I see she has actually plaid the Whore, and lost her Integrity. Let her Children and Favorites say what they please concerning her Purity and Infallibility,

I will no more believe them against evidence, than I would have believed that Impudent Slut, who told the Justice it was impossible she should have a Bastard, though the Brat was then in presence.

In the first and best times of Christianity the Church of *Rome* professed all those Articles of Faith the Church of *England* now doth, and none else, she now professeth these, and a great many more, which were never thought of in the purest times of Christianity, nor have any Foundation but her own proud, obstinate and blinded will. So that the Church of *Rome* is just as unlike what she formerly was, as she is unlike what the Church of *England* now is. There is the same difference betwixt what she now is, and what she formerly was, as betwixt a Woman whilst she continues honest and firm to her Husband, and when she prostitutes her self to other mens Lusts. If any time can be assigned when those Doctrines and Practices which are purely Popish, and are now imposed as terms of Communion with the Church of *Rome*, were not received by the Christian Church in general, nor by the Church of *Rome* in particular (as I am sure there may, and do think it sufficient to name at present the first 300 years after Christ, during which time that Church would have abhorred the very naming of such things as are since made equal to any Divine Institutions) then there was a Church, yea at *Rome*, from whose Unity the Church of *Rome* as now modelled did separate. When she first imposed those Doctrines and unlawful practices, she began her Separation.

We are so far from being Schismatics, we do not separate from her in any thing wherein she is either a Church, or Christian. We receive all those Articles

of Faith: the Church of *Rome* did when purely Christian, and none but those. And consequently we remain the same Church, from which the Church of *Rome* did separate by her New, Irrational, and Idolatrous Impositions. That which is now called the Protestant Religion, and as maintained in the Church of *England*, is the true Ancient, Catholick, and Apostolick Religion. The *Romish* Religion is a new upstart thing in comparison with it. Not any one of her Doctrines was owned by the Christian Church in any of the five first Centuries after Christ and his Apostles. Not any one, is truly useful for the promoting of true Christianity, or commendable on any Religious account. Not any one of them, that is of more than an Humane Original.

Nay so far is this charge of Schism against this Church from being true, they cannot possibly make it sense, till they do demonstrate the Popes Supremacy over the Catholick Church diffusive. Which I believe all the Learned and considering men amongst them do despair of; at least will, when they peruse that Accurate and most Learned Treatise of Dr. *Barrows* on this Subject. Wherein he has demonstrated how Groundless, Unreasonable, Absurd, and Foolish this claim is, to the eternal shame of all that shall pretend it any longer.

Those who are Papists and live in this Kingdom are undoubtedly chargeable with Schism, in being lawful for such to Communicate with us in the same Publick Offices, and they actually doing so, till prohibited by *Pius V.* who had as little right to exercise any Authority over any of the Subjects of this Kingdom, as any other man has to govern the whole world.

Whereas your Friend calleth the Church of Rome
the Mother of this of England, he might have done
well to have annexed his proof of it, or reason why
he said it. For my part I could never yet see any
Argument produced, which did prove her more than
a Step-Mother. As such she used us a great while;
But at last (God be praised) we arrived to such years
of discretion, as to understand our own Freedom and
Liberty. We justly cast off her Yoke, and eased
our selves of her wicked and ungodly Tyranny.

Mr. Thorndike was a man of great Learning and
note: And does say, *That they who separate from
the Church of Rome as Idolaters, are thereby
Schismaticks before God.* But his saying so, does
not prove it. Nor doth he charge the Church of
England with Schism herein, which was that your
Friend pretended. Though Mr. Thorndike doth
endeavour in that Book, to excuse the Church of
Rome from Idolatry; yet he seems to have altered his
judgment before he died. *And here it were well if
those who so often alledge Mr. Thorndikes Judg-
ment in favour of their Cause, would weigh the
words of a Letter of his, said to be written a-
bout a year before he died.*

Just
Weights
and Mea-
sures.

Dr. Tindal
of Idola-
try.

*To pray to the Saints
(faith he) for those things which only God can give,
as all Papists do, is in the proper sense of the
words, Idolatry. If they say, their meaning is by
a figure only, to desire them to procure their re-
quests of God; how dare any Christian trust his
Soul with that Church, which teacheth that, which
must needs be Idolatry in all that understand not
that figure? What his maturest judgment was in
this point, you may see more largely in the Con-
ferences in Answer to T. G's Dialogue.*

If your Friend must needs write after Mr. Thorndikes Copy, he should first have taken care to have understood Mr. Thorndikes meaning: And it would have been more prudent to have pitched on some other subject, and not have chosen the weakest part of his Book. But some men are so unfortunate, as to admire and imitate others of note, only in their imperfections: like *Aristotles Scholar*, who hearing his Master stammer in his discourse, thought that was the only instance wherein he was to imitate him.

Suppose now there were not any apparent hurt in the Worship of Images, nor in any thing else wherein the Church of *Rome* is singular from the Church of *England* and all Protestant Churches; yet what is there of real excellency, worth, or usefulness in any or all the particulars peculiar to that Church, that can justify any ones leaving the Communion of the Church of *England* to joyn with her? Especially seeing this of *England* neither has at present, nor had originally any dependance on her: They cannot prove this of *England* to be no true Church, how ever confidently they talk at some times. This has all the Essentials and Integrals too, of a Christian Church. The Church of *Rome* has not any means instituted by Christ, or his Apostles, for the furthering of mens Salvation, but what we have. Nay there are many things in that Church, which are if not inconsistent with *the truth of Grace*, yet greatly prejudicial to its growth. And therefore considering your Soul is concerned, I hope there can be no danger of your forsaking a safe Communion, to joyn with a Church, which must certainly and at best make your condition very hazardous. How dan-

dangerous it is trusting your Soul in that Communion, because we generally grant a possibility of Salvation to some in that Church, and how unjust, as well as uncharitable they be, in denying it to people in our Churches, you may learn from the Reverend Dr. Tillotson in his Excellent Sermon on *1 Cor. 3. 15.* A Sermon which were it but often enough read, and duly considered, would hinder any Protestant from resigning up to the Church of *Rome*, and prevail with any Papist, who has any thing of Conscience, to relinquish Popery.

If you take care to adhere constantly to the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints, and to live Godly, Righteously, and soberly in this present world, and to depend entirely on the Merits of the Blessed Jesus, and to wait on God Conscientiously in his publick Ordinances, in any Church where the Providence of God shall place you, nothing being there made a term of Communion, which is not plainly (by which I mean in express words, or by immediate and direct consequence) forbid in the Holy Scriptures, you do as much to secure your Salvation, as is necessary, in the judgment of

Your

Most Humble and

Obedient Servant,

S. B.